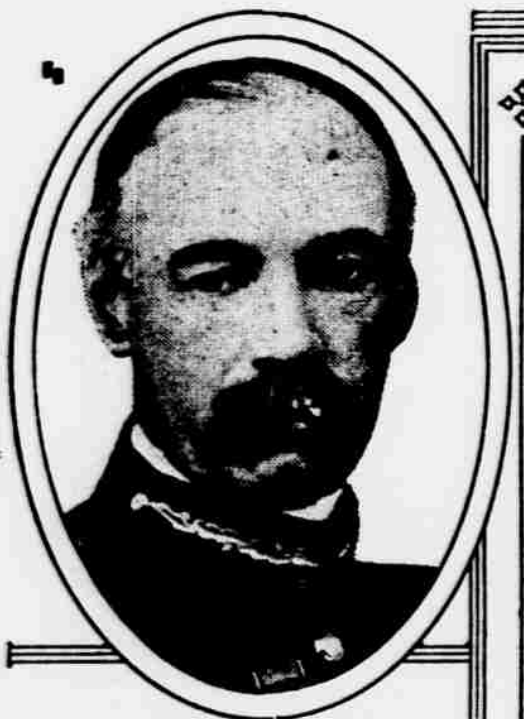
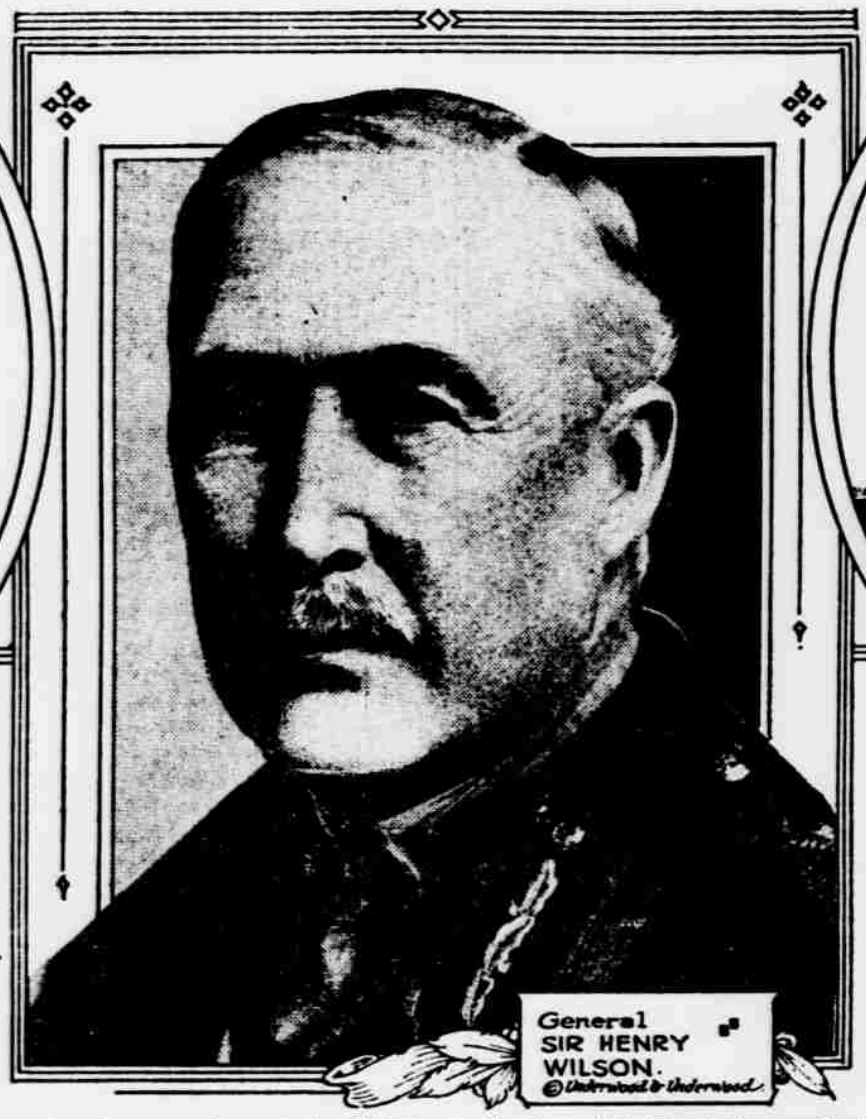
A New Military Control in Great Britain



General SIR HENRY S. RAWLINSON.



General SIR HENRY WILSON.
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General SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

By F. CUNLIFFE-OWEN.

THE supersession of Gen. Sir William Robertson by Gen. Sir Henry Wilson is according to Premier Lloyd George's admission in Parliament on Tuesday last a concession by Great Britain to the United States, to France and to the other nations of the Entente. It is well that this should be thoroughly understood and appreciated in America, where an attempt has been made to create the impression that Robertson's virtual removal from the post of Chief of the Imperial Staff and principal military member of the Army Council in London has been brought about by a discreditable politico-journalistic intrigue. The fact of the matter is that unity of military action, which President Wilson and the leading statesmen of France, Italy and England have come to regard as indispensable to the ultimate victory of our cause, had become impossible as long as Sir William Robertson remained in power at Whitehall.

The Failure at Cambrai.

Col. Repington, former military expert of the London *Times*, in his all too extravagant partisanship in behalf of Robertson attributes the muddle at Cambrai before Christmas to the failure of the Cabinet in London to supply the British command in France with the full quota of troops needed to carry out the operations planned by the late Chief of the Imperial Staff. If this had really been the case, Sir William should not have permitted the execution of his projects until he had a sufficient number of divisions and guns for the purpose.

The real reason of the failure of Gen. Sir Julian Byng's coup at Cambrai was the absence of any proper understanding with the French forces available for co-operation and support. There were several French divisions within call. But they had not been warned and their assistance was not invoked until too late.

Absence of Unity.

If the achievements of the Entente Powers in France during the last forty-four months of war have not been commensurate with the patriotic sacrifices which they have made and with the magnificent heroism of their troops, it has been due to this selfsame absence of necessary unity of understanding and action between those who have had supreme direction of the operations of the different armies. At one critical moment in the great battle of the Marne its victorious issue was imperilled through a misunderstanding between Marshal Joffre and Lord French. Indeed, it was the difficulty of securing the agreement of this British Field Marshal to the views of the French Generalissimo that led to his supercession by Sir Douglas Haig and his return to England.

Sir Douglas is a man of exquisite tact, and if he had been left to himself and had been accorded a free hand would have worked in complete unison with his French brother commanders, among whom he enjoys well deserved popularity. Unfortunately he did not have the same degree of authority that had been enjoyed by Lord French.

The latter had been granted full liberty of strategical action by Lord Kitchener, the then Secretary of State for War. Kitchener was clever enough to realize that it was impossible to direct from London the operations of the British forces in the field in France.

It is a notorious fact that during the last two months of the life of Kitchener an endeavor was made to clip his wings and to restrict the authority of which he had become invested as Secretary of State for War. Sir William Robertson, who had accomplished marvels in the way of feeding the troops as Quartermaster-General in the staff of Lord French, was brought home from France and appointed Chief of the Imperial Staff in the place of Gen. Sir Archibald Murray, but with vastly increased and altogether exceptional powers—at the expense of Kitchener. Although he had distinguished himself chiefly as an administrator he was given the control and supervision of all the British armies in the field and the supreme direction of their strategical operations.

Resentment in France.

Kitchener perished at sea at the height of his well earned fame and popularity before there had been sufficient time to exasperate him into resigning the Secretaryship of State for War. But Robertson remained possessed of the exceptional powers with which he had been invested and made use of them from that time on to the uttermost limit.

At one time he aroused so much resentment in France that he was obliged to permit Sir Douglas Haig to subordinate himself in a certain operation to the French Generalissimo Nivelle. For reasons which it would take too long to enumerate here and which were not wholly military, Nivelle failed in his attempt to hurl back the Germans to any extent and was superseded by Petain as Generalissimo.

This had the effect of rendering Robertson more than ever disinclined to defer to the views of the French Commander in Chief. Indeed, he got into such a habit of rejecting each proposal of the French military authorities for concerted action that he came to the nickname among them of "General Non-Non," since he always said "Non" to everything.

This was an intolerable condition of affairs, which lasted far too long. The difficulty has been solved by the appointment of Gen. Sir Henry Wilson in his place.

Gen. Wilson's Career.

Sir Henry, a gifted and brilliant Irishman, with all the tact and charm of manner of his race, is the very antithesis of Sir William Robertson. It was Sir Henry who while commandant of the Staff College in 1908 worked out the main plans for the British expeditionary force on the Continent which were followed to the very letter six years afterward on the outbreak of the present war.

The story goes that lecturing at the Staff College, Sir Henry indicated Mons as the point near which, if ever Germany invaded Belgium, the British force would find itself in great difficulties by reason of the inadequacy of the number of its men and of its guns. The plans of the operations were his. Curiously enough it fell to him to contribute in no small measure to the success of the retreat from Mons by holding up the forces of Von Kluck from early dawn until nightfall on the memorable August 26, 1914, with a couple of divisions, though outnumbered by about five to one in men and guns.

Sir Henry Wilson, who received the star of the Order of the Bath for his services on this occasion, did not manage to hit things off well with Lord French and accordingly asked to be relieved of the necessity of serving any longer under his orders, and returned to England.

Owing to the personal hostility and prejudice against him of Sir William Robertson at the War Department Sir Henry was unable to secure employment until Premier Lloyd George's attention was drawn to the matter. Lloyd George made Wilson's acquaintance, was greatly impressed by him and so much struck by his cleverness that when he went to Rome last autumn to attend the conference held there of the Premiers and Foreign Ministers of the Entente he insisted upon Sir Henry Wilson accompanying him, along with Gen. Smuts, as his military advisers.

Representative at Versailles.

When it was decided to organize a supreme war council at Versailles and Gen. Foch, the brain of the victory of the Marne, was appointed representative of France, the British Premier gratified the authorities in Paris by nominating Sir Henry Wilson as English plenipotentiary. It was found impossible, however, for this council to accomplish anything as long as its decisions were disapproved, negatived and obstructed by Gen. Sir William Robertson at Whitehall. That is why he has been obliged to resign his post and to make way for Gen. Sir Henry Wilson, whose place in the Entente War Council Board at Versailles has been taken by his close friend and crony Gen. Sir Henry Rawlinson, an officer of much the same type.

Like Wilson, Sir Henry Rawlinson is a thorough man of the world, a soldier of the scientific and intellectual order and a shining light of the Staff College, of which he was commandant for several years. He was with Roberts in India, with Kitchener in the Sudan and with Sir George White in the defence of Ladysmith, is the author of that standard volume known as *The Officer's Note Book* and is the son of the famous Orientalist, archæologist and explorer of the ruins of Persia and Mesopotamia, who was the first to decipher the cuneiform inscriptions in Persia.

Whatever friction there may have been between the military authorities of the various Entente Powers is now, thanks to these new appointments, a thing of the past, and perfect unity of action is assured in all future strategic operations.

Team Work Now Sure.

There is no danger of any further misunderstanding. Team work is assured. Sir Henry Wilson and Sir Henry Rawlinson, who are on terms of great intimacy with Gen. Smuts, now the military member of the War Cabinet in London, are in complete harmony with Gen. Foch, the chief of the General Staff of the French army, and the most trusted military adviser of Premier Clemenceau.

All that is necessary for the future success of our cause is that the very necessary removal of Gen. Sir William Robertson from the chieftaincy of the Imperial General Staff at Whitehall should not be allowed to be used for purposes of discreditable political intrigue to bring about the overthrow of Lloyd George. Lloyd George's downfall would be hailed at Berlin as a great victory. The German newspapers make no secret about the matter and intimate that whereas the shipwrecks of the former French Cabinets were mere footnotes in the history of the war, the defeat of Lloyd George and his disappearance from the Premiership would form one of the most important chapters of the volume.

Flawless Emeralds Most Precious of Stones

AN emerald free from flaw would be the most precious of all stones, maintain experts of the Smithsonian Institution in a recently published bulletin. The emerald is unfortunately seldom flawless, and were this not the case the emerald would be of greater value than the diamond.

A good diamond to-day is worth from $250 to $400 a carat, according to its purity and size, while an emerald varies in value from $350 to $500 a carat, increasing rapidly with size. Flawless emeralds weighing more than four carats are among the rarest jewels; a perfect stone of four carats is virtually priceless, whereas a diamond of equal weight would bring only $1,000 to $2,000.

It is probable that all the emeralds of the ancients came from the so-called Cleopatra emerald mines in Upper Egypt, worked as early as 1650 B. C., abandoned and lost sight of during the Middle Ages, but rediscovered early in the nineteenth century.

Many virtues were once ascribed to this stone; when worn it was held to be a preservative against epilepsy and other ailments. It was also valuable as a charm against evil spirits;

The crystals are simple in form; merely hexagonal prisms attached at one end to the matrix, with usually a flat face at right angles to its axis on the other end. They are invariably flawed, so much so that a "flawless emerald" has become a proverbial expression for unattainable perfection.

The largest single crystal, said to weigh nine and three-quarter ounces, is in possession of the Duke of Devonshire, but the National Museum at Washington has an excellent specimen from Stony Point, N. C., which weighs eight and three-quarter ounces, or more than 1,200 carats, and is the largest ever found in the United States.